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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Proposed National Intelligence Estimate
on MIA/POW

1. Reference your memorandum of 17 October, I agree that the Community needs to come to grips with the MIA/POW issue, to provide an agreed projection of the policy environment that we will face over the next few years. At the same time, I would not propose that in the process we reassess the evidence regarding whether or not there are living Americans being held against their will on Southeast Asia--a subject you and your people continue to handle sensitively and professionally for the Community, and which others such as the Tighe Commission have reexamined and could not find reason to doubt anyone could do a better job than you are already doing.

2. I understand that in discussions among the Chairman of the NIC, your representatives, and other members of the Community dealing with the MIA/POW issue, that what is proposed is in any event something quite different--something that has not been done and needs doing. That would be a projection of how the North Vietnamese (and with them the Laos, Cambodians, and on the sidelines the Chinese and Soviets) will likely play out the MIA/POW issue over the next few years, given a range of assumptions about what they may have at their disposal to deal with. This is a doable although admittedly daunting estimative task, and a legitimate one for the Community to accept.

3. We therefore look to taking on your proposal as a reasonable, albeit non-trivial request, and we very much appreciate your offer of a drafter to develop a Terms of Reference and a Concept Paper on this difficult and sensitive subject. We look forward to seeing the first draft of these, so that we may be able to make a final determination as how to proceed. We stand by to provide you our full support.

William J. Casey

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IC Staff



DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20340-6131

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17 October 1986

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: DIA Request for POW/MIA National Estimate (U)

1. (U) The challenges of POW/MIA issues continue to be a major concern of policymakers and the intelligence community. Significant resources are directed toward this subject by the intelligence community, and we believe the time is especially relevant now to produce a national estimate on this issue of high national interest.

2. (C/NF) Such a definitive document produced by the intelligence community would estimate what the community sees taking place over the next 5 years and the continuing implications for the United States.

a. (C/NF) It would serve as a baseline from 1986 and enhance the community's position as the POW/MIA issue evolves over the next few years.

b. (C/NF) It would address the Vietnamese approach (and that of others in the area) to handling the POW/MIA issue particularly after Operation Homecoming, fully examining the question of the fate of Americans unaccounted for in Southeast Asia and laying out the track record of the governments in the region and their use of POW/MIA issues to obtain identifiable national objectives.

3. (U) DIA is prepared to offer you a principal drafter and an initial TOR/Concept Paper.

4. (U) DIA strongly recommends that a POW/MIA estimate be undertaken as soon as possible and be included in the FY 1987 NIC production plan.

LEONARD H. PERROOTS
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director

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